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226 although not everyone owned one. Quain also described Trumaí fish nets, but netting must have been a minor technique, as he did not see it practiced during his stay.

[170] Throughout the upper Xingú area it was common practice to construct fish dams across the mouths of lagoons. There were two such fish weirs in the Trumaí lagoon, one near its mouth, the other across a small inlet near the village. Their purpose was to block the fish from escape to the main stream when drugs were placed in the water. They were built by driving upright stakes into the floor of the lagoon, after which a wall of rubbish and branches was built against the fence. One dam was constructed by the village cooperatively, while the other was said to have been built by a single man.

226 423 The Trumaí lagoon was considered the property of the community, and the Trumaí maintained exclusive fishing rights in it. The water in the lagoon is clear in comparison to the muddy Kuluene, and the fishing excellent. A good proportion of the fishing was done there, especially when traps and poisons were used, but they also had fishing rights in other lagoons within the territory of abandoned Trumaí villages. In addition, they fished in the Kuluene and Kulisseu and ranged as far afield as the Batoví River.

[576] [201] While most fishing trips were carried out within a day, some lasted two or three days. When the fishermen returned, they were greeted with a conventional shout by all the villagers. The shout was meant to welcome the food rather than the fishermen, and similar cries were heard when well laden gathering parties returned from a short jaunt into the forest.

501 422 226 About one-half of the men owned canoes, and according to Quain's informants, only six did not know how to build them. The bark canoes of the upper Xingú are not difficult to make, and it can be assumed that the community did not need more, inasmuch as fishing parties always consisted of two men. Larger groups went out of the village in a body when many fish were needed for a ceremony or to feed guests, but they usually split into pairs. Cooperative fishing groups of more than two men were needed only for drugging and perhaps for netting. On one *kuwasi* fishing expedition over half the males of the village went to the lagoon with bundles of shredded bark. Quain noted that this was one of the few examples of group labor transcending the immediate family.

226 571 Two-man fishing expeditions were composed of the owner or borrower of the canoe and his helper (*tau*). The *tau* generally paddled while the owner fished. Only while serving as a helper was he referred to as the *tau* of that man. Thus, if a person went as the helper of Makurawa, he was referred to as "Makurawatau." He shared in the catch, but whether he received less than the canoe owner is not indicated by the field notes. There seemed to be no fixed standard for the selection of the *tau*, nor

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CHAPTER THREE

Trumaí Social Organization

Property Ownership

105 Trumaí society was relatively simple. There was no social stratification based on wealth, nor were the mechanisms of social control and cohesion highly developed. This was in accord with the individualization of productive effort and the low level of economic surplus. The political unit was a single community, the sole bearer of Trumaí culture.

All land and productive resources were considered the property of the community, and the right to their exploitation resided with any individual willing to expend the labor. Gardens were individual property, but only in the sense that the man who reclaimed the land from the jungle was entitled to its product. There was no concept of alienable property in land, entailing the right of disposition. The *piquí* trees were said to be owned individually, but the owner exercised exclusive rights only over the first fruits. Other wild food plants were community property and their fruits belonged to the gatherer.

The fishing rights to lagoons and backwaters of the rivers belonged to the tribes in whose territory they were located. There was no individual ownership of fishing sites.

There was property in foods, but as soon as they were cooked they were freely distributed. *Beijú* belonged to the women, but the manioc out of which it was prepared was said to be the property of the man who grew it. Such distinctions were largely academic. Actually, the men grew the vegetable and the women harvested it, prepared it, and cooked it, after which it was distributed and eaten. The same situation prevailed in regard to the products of fishing, hunting, and gathering. Salt was the only exception, as it was prepared and owned by individual men and women. The difference undoubtedly lies in the fact that salt was an important trade item, while the other commodities were not.

Very little property can be said to have belonged to the family. Baskets and gourd containers were made by the men for themselves and for the women, but they were often used by both a man and his wife. Nearly all material objects outside of natural resources were owned by the person who made them or the person to whom an object was given. House ownership was vague, since houses were built and occupied by more than one man, and abandoned when the village moved. The house, however, was often considered the property of the man who put

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the greatest time and effort into its building. Quain was reprimanded for speaking of the house in which Maibu lived as "Maibu's," for his brother-in-law, Mata'wai, had built it. This point of property was confirmed by others, despite the fact that Maibu was the head of the household and acted as host when guests entered.

To the Trumaí, the only important property was in the personal possession of transportable, material artifacts. These ranged from tools and weapons to ceremonial objects and trinkets obtained from Quain. The second class of property was probably cherished more than the first, which was viewed as consisting of everyday necessities. The combs, feathers, beads, European novelties, papers, and other such items that all men and women possessed were carefully kept in baskets and gourds near their hammocks. A man and wife would often keep some of their personal belongings in the same containers, but beyond this there was a special category of personal possessions called *wacta*. This highly valued personal property was kept by each individual in separate gourds, where it was safe from the gift claims of kinsmen and reasonably free from the danger of theft.

The privacy of this property was especially observed by opposite sexes, although not as strictly by mates. Quain was told by one man that it was "bad" for a man to look at a woman's *wacta*, although he rummaged at will through the personal belongings of the men. The taboo on male contact with women's *wacta* was due in part to inclusion within it of articles used during menstruation.

Accompanying the stress on personal and private ownership of certain material objects was a strong sense of acquisitiveness. Quain expressed this as follows: "There can be no doubt that property ownership is a paramount drive in this culture. Children are not content to see, as they are in Fiji, but things must be theirs. The possessive pronoun has an importance here which is striking. Once articles are received, they seem to disappear. They are probably carefully guarded among personal belongings." Significantly, the word for "gift-giving," literally translated, also means "to yield to a demand."

The Trumaí were tremendously interested in Quain's belongings and made continual attempts to acquire them. Adults as well as children whined in order to obtain objects from him. This attitude was manifested towards useful objects such as knives and axes, but they also pleaded and begged for articles having only curiosity value to them. As Quain said, to be curious about an object was to want it. Possession was desired for its own sake, for only slight prestige was gained by accumulating material objects, and utilitarian articles, such as knives, axes, and pots, were easily borrowed.

Despite the possessiveness described by Quain, the Trumaí were restricted by strong gift-giving ties. A true brother or a son had a claim

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outright rebellion. Despite a great deal of grumbling and non-compliance, they still tacitly recognized Maibu as chief.

One of Maibu's main prerogatives was his talking function. He alone had the role of exhorter of the people. Other men would be "ashamed," he said, to speak so. Most of Maibu's speeches were delivered at night in the men's circle or before work started in the morning. The attitude of his audience ranged from interest to bored indifference and outright ridicule. One morning Maibu lay in his hammock and shouted for everyone to go out to gather fruit. The initial response to this was a shout from some of the houses, telling him to be quiet. Later some people drifted out of the village carrying baskets, and still later others followed, grumbling that they were being driven from the village. This was a common complaint. Because of the tone in which it was said, Quain thought at first that they were actually being exiled.

The chief had no symbols of office outside of the above prerogatives; yet a deference of sorts was shown him. When Maibu entered the men's circle or Quain's house, someone always got up to give him a seat. Tobacco was usually supplied him, and the donor would roll the cigarette and light it before making the presentation. Even the men who told Quain that Maibu was not a "real chief" made these gifts. Maibu himself did not hesitate to send someone across the village through the rain to fetch something. These favors were usually performed by his kinsmen and co-residents, although occasionally more distant persons obliged. On the other hand, Maibu was expected to be generous towards all the other Trumaí. Nearly everything that Quain gave him passed to other hands. Maibu did not even have a bow of his own.

Maibu's poverty was attributable in part to his heavy gift obligations and in part to the fact that he had no garden. He said to Quain that he did not plant because he was a chief. However, he was not completely a non-producer. He went fishing, joined in collective labor, and helped his wife in gathering. At none of these tasks did he occupy himself strenuously. The only articles that he manufactured were arrows and spears. He thus made no trade commodities, relying on others, principally his co-residents, for all his artifacts and food. On most days he did little except talk, sleep, and philander with the unmarried women.

Inheritance of the chieftaincy was nominally patrilineal. Maibu, however, was the son of the daughter of the Trumaí chief whom von den Steinen had met, indicating that the office can pass matrilineally if there are no male heirs available. (Maibu's brother's son, Jawaku, adopted by Maibu through the levirate, was to have been the next Trumaí chief.) But the Trumaí chief reported by Galvão nine years later was Aloari, who was only a distant relative of Maibu.[8] What happened in the years between 1938 and 1947 is not known, but it is apparent that

[8] This information was received verbally from Dr. Eduardo Galvão.

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occasionally someone, who was occupied or in bad temper, would chase the child away or slap him lightly. The only time that Quain ever saw a child given physical punishment was after some petty pilfering. In this case the father whipped him angrily across the legs. Usually, however, only a verbal reprimand followed misconduct.

Children were in a somewhat privileged category. With respect to gift-giving, the claims of the young were particularly strong, although, as noted above, they were not unlimited. When a child wanted something, it would either be given it or a good excuse would be offered. Parents backed up such demands, and were hurt and aggrieved if the request was refused.

Children had almost as strong control over their property as did the older Trumaí. Quain dealt directly with the children to secure specimens of children's playthings. The children manifested the same possessiveness as their parents in these dealings and in their general concepts of property. Even little Katsits cried when her father wanted to put up her necklace in the trade game. Her father let her keep the necklace and sought other objects to exchange.

Children cried frequently, and their tears rarely went unheeded. Teasing by adults was common, but when a child broke into full and lusty howls, he was soothed and comforted. There were no admonitions against crying itself. The only time a child was reprimanded for crying was when it was absolutely unwarranted and annoying to the adults. In such cases, a stern voice was all that was required. By the time a boy reached the age of ten he rarely wept, for he was then going through the initial phases of the puberty rites, and courage and fortitude were expected.

Little work was demanded of children. The boys often accompanied the women on gathering expeditions, but this was the only help they gave them. On the other hand, they were frequently called on to perform errands for the men or lend them some small aid. These tasks were done willingly.

The older boys occasionally accompanied the men on hunting and fishing trips, thus learning the necessary subsistence techniques. They participated actively in fish poisoning, helped in the preparation and application of the *tsuasi* bark, and in the gathering of the drugged fish. Of all the subsistence techniques, horticulture was the last to be learned. The youngest Trumaí to have a garden was Autsuki, who was going through the final stages of the puberty ceremonies. Maibu's foster son, Jawaku, was still considered too young to cultivate his own plot, although he was no more than two years younger than Autsuki. Most of the boys were well acquainted with the work, however, through trailing the men to the gardens and watching them.